

Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 /059 W

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R 271100Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2638

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24123

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS:PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: THANOM KITTIKHACHON REQUESTS PERMISSION TO RETURN TO
THAILAND

SUMMARY: DESPITE WIDESPREAD REPORTS, THE WIFE AND DAUGHTER OF
FORMER PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKHACHON DID NOT FLY IN FROM
SINGAPORE TO NEGOTIATE THE CONDITIONS FOR THANOM'S RETURN TO
VISIT HIS SERIOUSLY ILL FATHER. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEY
WILL COME AT A LATER DATE. INDIRECT REQUEST FOR HIS RETURN WAS
MADE TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON AUGUST 26. NSCT SECRETARY-GENERAL
ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THANOM'S RETURN.
PRIME MINISTER SENI ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 27 THAT THANOM SHOULD
NOT RETURN AT PRESENT. HE DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER RTG WOULD ALLOW
THANOM TO RETURN IF HIS FATHER DIES. END SUMMARY.

1. POLICE HAVE ADVISED EMBASSY RSO THAT THE WIFE AND DAUGHTER
OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER FIELD MARSHAL THANOM KITTIKHACHON
WERE SCHEDULED TO FLY INTO BANGKOK FROM SINGAPORE ON AUGUST 27.
THE REPORTED PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS TO NEGOTIATE THE CONDITIONS
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FOR THE RETURN OF THANOM TO VISIT HIS SERIOUSLY ILL, 91 YEAR-

OLD FATHER, KHUN SOPHITBANNARAK. AS OF 1500 HOURS THEY HAD NOT ARRIVED IN BANGKOK.

2. THANOM'S REQUEST TO VISIT HIS FATHER WAS MADE INDIRECTLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON AUGUST 26 BY THANOM'S SISTER THROUGH DR. AKHOM SORASUCHAT, DEMOCRAT MP FROM BANGKOK. DR. AKHOM VERIFIED THE SERIOUS CONDITION OF KHUN SOPHITBANNARAK.

3. SURIN MATSADIT, MINISTER ATTACHED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, TOLD THE PRESS ON AUGUST 26 THAT IF THANOM IS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THAILAND ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, THE DURATION OF HIS STAY WILL BE RESTRICTED AND HE WILL BE UNDER STRICT GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE THAI EMBASSY IN SINGAPORE HAS BEEN TOLD TO KEEP AN EYE ON THANOM'S MOVEMENTS AND TO PREVENT HIM FROM COMING BACK.

4. SUTHAM SAENGPRATHUM, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) IS REPORTED IN THE AUGUST 27 THAI LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER THAI RATH AS SAYING THAT THE NSCT WOULD DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THANOM REGARDLESS OF THE REASON FOR HIS RETURN.

5. PRIME MINISTER SENI STATED TO THE PRESS ON AUGUST 27 THAT THANOM SHOULD NOT RETURN TO BANGKOK FOR THE TIME BEING. SENI SAID, "IN PRINCIPLE WE DO NOT WANT THANOM TO RETURN. WE HAD ENOUGH TROUBLE WHEN PRAPHAT RETURNED LAST WEEK." HE DECLINED TO STATE WHETHER THE RTG WOULD ALLOW THANOM TO RETURN IF HIS FATHER DIES, SAYING HE DID NOT WISH TO BE INTERPRETED AS SOMEHOW WISHING THANOM'S FATHER WOULD DIE.

6. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE RTG MAY BE PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE RETURN OF THANOM TO VISIT HIS FATHER BUT IS OBVIOUSLY PICKING ITS WAY CAREFULLY. BY MOVING SLOWLY ON THIS ISSUE THE RTG MAY HOPE TO DIFFUSE ANY PROTESTS AGAINST THANOM'S RETURN. THANOM HAS A GOOD REASON FOR RETURNING, AS HIS FATHER APPARENTLY IS DYING. THANOM HAS NEVER BEEN FEARED AND HATED AS ARE HIS SON, NARONG KITTIKHACHON, OR FIELD MARSHAL PRAPHAT. THE NSCT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ORGANIZE DEMONSTRATIONS BUT WILL PROBABLY NOT GET MUCH PUBLIC SUPPORT. THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, THAT THE DEMONSTRATIONS THEMSELVES COULD

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LEAD TO VIOLENCE SUCH AS OCCURRED DURING PRAPHAT'S VISIT ON AUGUST 21.
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